

AN ADVISORY SERVICES PANEL REPORT

Ada County Highway District Boise, Idaho



Urban Land
Institute

Ada County Highway District Boise, Idaho

Regionalism, Consolidation, and the Future

June 17–22, 2007
An Advisory Services Panel Report

ULI—the Urban Land Institute
1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.
Suite 500 West
Washington, D.C. 20007-5201

About ULI—the Urban Land Institute

The mission of the Urban Land Institute is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI is committed to

- Bringing together leaders from across the fields of real estate and land use policy to exchange best practices and serve community needs;
- Fostering collaboration within and beyond ULI's membership through mentoring, dialogue, and problem solving;
- Exploring issues of urbanization, conservation, regeneration, land use, capital formation, and sustainable development;
- Advancing land use policies and design practices that respect the uniqueness of both built and natural environments;
- Sharing knowledge through education, applied research, publishing, and electronic media; and

- Sustaining a diverse global network of local practice and advisory efforts that address current and future challenges.

Established in 1936, the Institute today has more than 38,000 members from 90 countries, representing the entire spectrum of the land use and development disciplines. Professionals represented include developers, builders, property owners, investors, architects, public officials, planners, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, academics, students, and librarians. ULI relies heavily on the experience of its members. It is through member involvement and information resources that ULI has been able to set standards of excellence in development practice. The Institute has long been recognized as one of the world's most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development.

©2007 by ULI—the Urban Land Institute
1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.
Suite 500 West
Washington, D.C. 20007-5201

All rights reserved. Reproduction or use of the whole or any part of the contents without written permission of the copyright holder is prohibited.

Cover photo ©Ada County Highway District.

About ULI Advisory Services

The goal of ULI's Advisory Services Program is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. Since 1947, this program has assembled well over 400 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalization, brownfields redevelopment, military base reuse, provision of low-cost and affordable housing, and asset management strategies, among other matters. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's Advisory Services.

Each panel team is composed of highly qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. They are chosen for their knowledge of the panel topic and screened to ensure their objectivity. ULI's interdisciplinary panel teams provide a holistic look at development problems. A respected ULI member who has previous panel experience chairs each panel.

The agenda for a five-day panel assignment is intensive. It includes an in-depth briefing day composed of a tour of the site and meetings with sponsor representatives; a day of hour-long interviews of typically 50 to 75 key community representatives; and two days of formulating recommendations. Many long nights of discussion precede the panel's conclusions. On the final day on site, the panel makes an oral presentation of its findings and conclusions to the sponsor. A written report is prepared and published.

Because the sponsoring entities are responsible for significant preparation before the panel's visit, including sending extensive briefing materials to each member and arranging for the panel to meet with key local community members and stakeholders in the project under consideration, partici-

pants in ULI's five-day panel assignments are able to make accurate assessments of a sponsor's issues and to provide recommendations in a compressed amount of time.

A major strength of the program is ULI's unique ability to draw on the knowledge and expertise of its members, including land developers and owners, public officials, academicians, representatives of financial institutions, and others. In fulfillment of the mission of the Urban Land Institute, this Advisory Services panel report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment.

ULI Program Staff

Marta V. Goldsmith
Senior Vice President, Community

Thomas W. Eitler
Director, Advisory Services

Cary Sheih
Senior Associate, Advisory Services

Matthew Rader
Senior Associate, Advisory Services

Carmen McCormick
Panel Coordinator, Advisory Services

Romana Kerns
Administrative Assistant, Advisory Services

Nancy H. Stewart
Director, Book Program

Laura Glassman, Publications Professionals LLC
Manuscript Editor

Betsy VanBuskirk
Art Director

Martha Loomis
Desktop Publishing Specialist/Graphics

Craig Chapman
Director, Publishing Operations

Acknowledgments

On behalf of the Urban Land Institute, the panel would like to thank the Ada County Highway District (ACHD) for inviting it to recommend strategies for improving relationships between ACHD transportation planning and design and local governments' comprehensive land use plans. Panel chair Charlie Long, speaking for the entire panel, commends the district for the courage it has demonstrated in seeking unbiased solutions to transportation and land use issues that are in the best interest of the community. The panel was struck by the district's willingness to avoid "turf protection" and to pursue a good-faith search for sensible solutions.

The panel gained immeasurably from discussions with ACHD commissioners; district staff members; elected officials of Boise, Eagle, Garden City, Kuna, Meridian, Star, and Ada County; representatives of key institutions, planning organizations, and civic groups; local residents; and the Idaho Transportation Department. In particular, the panel thanks John S. Franden, president of the ACHD commissioners; William Schweitzer, ACHD director; Steve Price, ACHD attorney; and top staff members of ACHD for their helpful explanations of the context and policy issues facing the highway district in carrying out its mission. Their invaluable assistance in providing basic information and coordinating local logistical issues was especially appreciated.

Mayors David Bieter (Boise), Nancy Merrill (Eagle), John Evans (Garden City), Tammy de Weerd (Meridian), and Nate Mitchell (Star); former mayor Dean O'Bray (Kuna); and Ada County Commissioners Paul Woods, Fred Tilman, and Rick Yzaguirre provided useful explanations of the city and county comprehensive planning processes and policies, as well as information about their relationships—and in some cases, differences—with district activities. Boise council members David Eberle and Elaine Clegg were also helpful in this regard.

Finally, the panel wishes to thank the dozens of other community, government, and business leaders, including members of the ULI District Council, who volunteered their time, thoughts, and experiences during the interview process. Opinions from these officials and residents of Ada County aided the panel's understanding of current growth issues and projected regional development problems. Survey forms completed by almost 150 residents also shed light on local concerns about the relationships between ACHD and the local general-purpose governments.

Contents

ULI Panel and Project Staff	6
Foreword: The Panel's Assignment	7
The Panel's Findings	11
How Should Development Change?	17
Changing the ACHD's Role	19
Suggested Legislative Agenda	22
Creating a Contractual Alliance for Integrated Planning	24
Conclusion	29
About the Panel	30

ULI Panel and Project Staff

Panel Chair

Charles A. Long
President
Charles A. Long Properties, LLC
Berkeley, California

Panel Members

William Dowd
Director, Plan and Project Implementation
Division
National Capital Planning Commission
Washington, D.C.

Matthew McKinney
Director, Public Policy Research Institute
University of Montana
Helena, Montana

Michael T. McLaughlin
Part-time faculty
City Planning Program
San Diego State University
Hemet, California

Douglas R Porter
President
The Growth Management Institute
Chevy Chase, Maryland

Mary Roberts
Director of Community Development
City of Littleton
Littleton, Colorado

David C. Slater
Retired
Reston, Virginia

Jim Soules
Principal
The Cottage Company
Redmond, Washington

Janet Taylor
Mayor
City of Salem
Salem, Oregon

ULI Project Staff

Cary Sheih
Senior Associate, Advisory Services

Andrea Holthouser
Director of Annual Giving
ULI Foundation

ULI On-Site Coordinator

Carmen McCormick
Panel Coordinator

Foreword: The Panel's Assignment

ULI has brought an advisory panel to Ada County three times in the past 12 years in response to requests to provide recommendations on regional growth issues. In 1995, the issues involved regional growth management. In 2005, the issue was the county's approval of large planned communities in its unincorporated areas. In 2007, the issue involves the county-wide delivery of road construction and maintenance services.

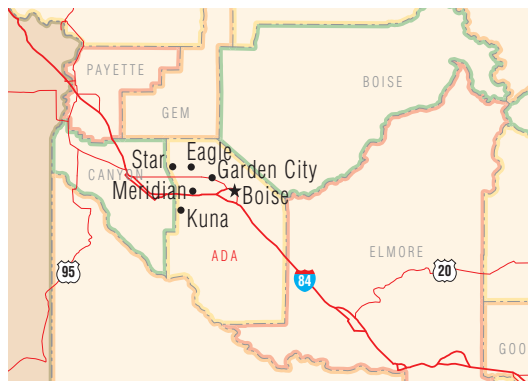
The recommendations of the previous panels are instructive, if only to highlight the reality that regional growth is a tough business and requires ongoing commitment. The 1995 panel made the following recommendations:

- Regional leadership must move beyond visions and policies to implement workable programs and regulations.
- The panel recommends that the Boise region develop an integrated growth management strategy based on sound land use planning and environmental protection, a workable fiscal strategy and a coordinated transportation policy, specifically addressing:
 - Agricultural land preservation to prevent urban sprawl
 - Preservation of open space and sensitive lands
 - Respecting and strengthening areas of impact: before communities in the Boise region can grow well they must know where their own boundaries are, as well as the boundaries of other communities. Currently, developments and annexations appear to be occurring in some communities without clear relationships to adopted plans and to areas of impacts.

The 2005 panel made these recommendations:



Location map.



Regional map.

- The panel recommends that Ada County and its communities make the existing “area of impact” system work. The county and its cities must focus on identifying specific nodes of development and intensity and then guide growth to those areas. It is also important to identify areas where development should not occur and create provisions to protect these lands.

- The panel recommends that the county and cities come together to discuss development on their mutual edges and to maximize their common interests. Specific attention should be paid to areas where there are overlapping rural and developed lands, regional transportation corridors and open spaces.
- It is imperative that there be complete buy-in to the Blueprint for Quality Growth [the plan for regional growth formulated in 2006] and that it is followed by all. Without regional cooperation, the long term economic viability of the Treasure Valley is put at risk. A key component of the panel's recommendation is that Ada County and its cities come together and stop acting unilaterally.

Whether these recommendations have been followed is not the subject of the current panel. What has happened over the past 12 years cannot be changed, and we can only hope to control our future, as reflected in the questions presented to the panel.

The Panel's Assignment

This panel was brought to Ada County to help resolve disputes among the Ada County Highway District (ACHD) and the land use jurisdictions (various cities and the county) concerning the service provided by the district and the consistency of decisions made by the land use jurisdictions that affect the regional road capital improvement plan. The panel was requested to respond to questions in three major policy areas:

- *Regionalism*
 - Because of the fractured politics and independent desires of local governments, is regionalism desirable and even possible in Ada County?
 - If so, what does the panel recommend that citizens, community leaders, and elected officials do to keep regional efforts alive and make them successful?
 - If not, what does the panel recommend to citizens, community leaders, and elected officials to provide the best services without a regional effort?

- *Consolidation*

- Is consolidation of transportation services working in Ada County today?
- If so, what can the community do to minimize the tension between local governments?
- If not, should the community replace its existing forms of consolidate government and, if so, with what?

- *ACHD's future and role*

- Is ACHD a benefit (efficiencies vs. politics) to the community?
- Is ACHD the right form of consolidated government for the Ada County community?
- If so, what can be done to help ACHD gain greater support from other governmental leaders and acceptance by them of some financial inequities to provide better regional facilities?
- If not, what is a better solution and system for Ada County?

Summary of Recommendations

The problems reflected in ACHD's questions for the panel are of long standing, with roots that go back to the district's formation in 1972. But they have been exacerbated by Ada County's tremendous growth over the last 15 years. Issues have arisen in decisions regarding the adequacy of funding for new roads, how best to involve the community in road designs, whether to include sidewalks and landscaping in road construction, and how to find the additional funding when a land use jurisdiction changes its development plans to accommodate more growth than previously planned. The panel could fairly conclude that this ongoing dispute has been a component of the same regional growth issues that brought the prior panels here. In fact, some of the recommendations of prior panels may directly apply to the current disagreements.

The panel's version of this dispute differs to some extent from the versions of the participants. On the basis of information gathered from all the parties involved, the panel suggests the following

facts and concerns are keys to improving the region's future.

The district maintains more than 2,100 miles of roads with 520 bridges throughout the county at an annual cost of \$41 million (fiscal 2007 budget). It invests about \$50 million annually in roadway construction to serve growth. While Ada County's population has virtually doubled in the last 15 years, the district has accumulated a huge backlog of unfunded roads. Its 20-year capital plan projects \$768.3 million of new road construction in 2006 dollars with an estimated total cost of over \$1 billion, including a reasonable rate of inflation. The largest share of roads that the district maintains is in the city of Boise, and the largest share of property tax revenues that pay for maintenance also comes from the city of Boise.

The panel received a lot of input on what kind of job the district is doing. The panel interviewed more than 100 people involved in planning for growth and development and, in particular, transportation planning. Another source of information was the 150 responses to questionnaires rating the planning and road-building performance of the district as well as the cities and the county. In general, most of the ratings of the district's performance in planning and building roads were extremely negative. Apparently, many people felt that neither the district nor the cities and county were doing a good job of responding to growth. Despite these negative comments, many survey respondents felt that the district does a good job of providing cost-effective maintenance of existing roads and highways. Many also responded that the district was best situated to expand and manage the countywide road network.

As the panel analyzed the data provided by the district, comments from the questionnaires, and the information from the interviews, the panel clearly saw that the district faces four fundamental concerns that need to be resolved:

- *The district does not have enough money to fulfill its mission.* This conclusion is a fact rather than an opinion. For comparison, the panel examined the road expenditures of the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) and local jurisdictions in Washoe County (the location of

Reno). Washoe County is the same size and growing at about the same rate as Ada County. The fact is that the Washoe County region (both the RTC and the local jurisdictions who maintain local roads) spends \$2 per capita annually on roads for every \$1 spent by the Ada County Highway District. The Washoe County RTC collects \$3.50 for every \$1.00 that the ACHD collects in development impact fees. At the current funding levels, these figures highlight why the ACHD is likely to fall further and further behind in funding needed road improvements unless county leaders find ways to obtain more money.

Related to this scarcity of funding is the complaint of some jurisdictions that they are not receiving their fair share of district revenues. They assert that all the locally generated revenues (property taxes, registration fees, and impact fees) should be returned as expenditures within their boundaries. The panel suggests that this issue is more a direct consequence of the scarcity of overall funding than any unfairness in distribution of funding. In fact, returning all property tax revenues to the jurisdiction of origin would jeopardize the funding of road maintenance in undeveloped rural areas.

Property tax subsidies from urban jurisdictions to maintain roads in rural areas are actually in the best interest of the region and should not be changed. The most important need for improving funding is not distribution, it is adequacy and, in particular, the adequacy of impact fees. The panel strongly suggests revisiting the impact fee program and revising the impact fee levels so that growth begins to pay its own way. This revision should include attempts to change the state enabling law for impact fees and enacting new laws to provide options for developers to finance the impact fee burden using land-secured financing, as described in the section of this report on the legislative agenda.

- *The district cannot plan how to spend the scarce money it has because the cities and the county do not follow their own land use plans.* Because the cities and the county compete with each other to attract tax-generating development, they approve unanticipated traffic-generating development not shown in their land use plans

or annexation areas, which makes planning by the district even more difficult. Without some way for the cities and the county to help pay for the additional costs of the new roads required by their unanticipated land use decisions, the district will fall even further behind.

- *Even with scarce money, the district tries to build some roads that the cities and the county do not want or that they feel are wrongly designed.* Because the cities and the county do not coordinate their land use plans with the district's road-building plan, the district frequently finds itself building roads through neighborhoods that the land use jurisdictions feel are too big or that do not have enough sidewalks or that have the wrong landscaping.
- *The district fails to meet many of the cities' and county's needs for routine service.* Frequently, the district simply fails to understand the needs that cities have for responding to constituent concerns. The district is perceived as serving primarily developers who rely on the district to build new roads. Most citizens are unfamiliar with district policies and duties, so when ordinary citizens have a concern over a crosswalk or a stop sign, they call their city officials, who in turn call the district. The result of this disconnect between city customers and district customers is that the district fails to respond quickly to the cities' customers—its own constituents.

As difficult as these problems seem, the panel believes that they are all fixable, provided that the elected leaders of the cities, county, and district commit themselves to setting aside their accumulated personal and jurisdictional animosities of the past ten years and commit to working on solutions. Here are the major themes of the panel's recommendations:

- *The leadership of the cities and the county need to address the consequences of jurisdictional competition for new development.* It is this competition that creates the instability in land use planning and makes road and other infrastructure planning so disorderly.
- *The district needs to change the way it delivers service.* It needs to plan its roads to serve the

cities' and county's land use plan and not impose new and improved roads on the community that the cities and county do not want. In other words, ACHD needs to see the cities and county as its customers. No other county in this country has a countywide road district that builds and maintains all the roads in its cities. After closely examining this unique service, the panel concluded that the district's countywide service provision is a major benefit for county residents and businesses. The panel's recommendations are shaped to preserve the value of the countywide highway district but change the parts of the district that are not working.

- *The panel believes that the county leadership needs to improve the quality of development.* The panel observed firsthand the existing and proposed development patterns and the consequences of the county's very rapid growth. On the basis of these observations, the panel believes that the leadership in this county should focus on fostering higher-quality development throughout the county.
- *The leadership needs to create a strong coalition to change state legislation over time to provide the tools needed to accommodate growth.* This recommendation includes creating innovative funding sources and better growth management tools that are currently denied under state law.
- *To accomplish these goals, the panel recommends that the cities, county, and district form a contractual joint powers authority.* Such an authority would provide a forum for integrating the various local comprehensive plans and impact areas and for conforming the district's capital program to the integrated plans. The contractual authority would approve subsequent changes in comprehensive plans only if the funding for road improvements to serve such changes was available. If land use changes are not associated with the needed funding, the district would be authorized to not sign plat maps and to not fund any improvements to serve proposed changes.

The remaining sections of this report detail the rationale and purposes of these recommendations.

The Panel's Findings

The panel had several opportunities to become familiar with the land use and transportation issues facing this area. A field trip, including a flyover and a drive-through, provided an understanding of growth and development patterns. Panelists interviewed more than 100 people representing diverse viewpoints and received more than 150 completed questionnaires from interested residents. This information was supplemented by a review of numerous documents provided by the highway district and other agencies. Therefore, the panel's findings are based on what people told the panel, what the panel reviewed in various documents, and what it saw on the ground.

What Is Working

Across the board, a strong common interest in sustaining the quality of life seems to exist within the valley. Everyone expressed a tremendous sense of pride in this valley. Everyone wanted it to be a better place to live, work, and play. Regardless of their views on land use and transportation, the people of this valley are passionate and care deeply about growth, development, and the quality of life.

Given this broad-based concern, not surprisingly a number of regional dialogues and planning processes have taken place. Those efforts have included, but are not limited to, the following:

- Blueprint for Good Growth, a regional plan involving extensive citizen participation, that is oriented to achieving the smart growth goals of more-compact development patterns to retain the environmental qualities so highly valued by residents, to be achieved through voluntary cooperation of the local jurisdictions;
- Communities in Motion, a six-county long-range plan developed by COMPASS, the region's metropolitan transportation planning organization,

that also promoted the location of growth near urban areas with ready availability of services;

- Transportation and Land Use Integration Plan, an outgrowth of the Blueprint for Good Growth, aimed at addressing the best methods to manage growth for a sustainable future, which includes new roadway design standards that conform to existing and planned land uses and urban design standards to be implemented by the cities and the county (commonly referred to as street typology);
- Treasure Valley Partnership, which brings the mayors of towns and cities in Ada and Canyon counties together to promote collaborative relationships;
- Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce, which among its activities has sponsored annual leadership conferences focused on regional issues; and
- Blue Ribbon Panel, which in 2003 considered and made recommendations for improving regional transportation planning.

The panelists gather information about Ada County through a flyover.





These land uses characterize the “disconnect” in land use decision making.

The panel formed the impression that leaders in the public and private sectors, as well citizens and representatives from nongovernmental organizations, understand that their futures are interconnected and that working together to guide the region’s growth is imperative.

In addition to these various regional conversations, the six cities and towns and Ada County have completed or are updating comprehensive land use plans to help guide growth and development within their jurisdictions. These efforts have identified “areas of impact” that provide some indication of the goals and aspirations of individual

communities. In other words, between regional and local efforts, there is no lack of planning for future growth.

The panel’s sense is that the county—if not the valley or the region as a whole—is lucky to have a unique countywide entity to build, operate, and maintain the road system. ACHD not only provides an effective and efficient means to manage the road system but also provides a great foundation on which to better integrate land use and transportation planning. In addition, the public generally views ACHD as an agency that does a good job of operating and maintaining the existing road system in the county (according to 55 percent of the survey respondents and most of the interviewees) and recognizes that having a regional entity build and maintain the road system for all local jurisdictions creates economies of scale. Furthermore, ACHD appears to be open to change, given its willingness to ask the ULI panel to examine its performance. Some people, including ACHD staff and commissioners, acknowledge that the district is already in the process of changing—trying to become more service oriented and to work more effectively with local jurisdictions, businesses, and the public.

Areas for Improvement

Although the highway district and local governments possess a number of positive attributes on which to build, the panel identified a number of areas that could be improved. First, despite the various regional conversations and planning processes, a common vision does not seem to exist for land use and development in the valley. Very few jurisdictions have adopted and are actively using the proposals for guiding growth that are presented in the Blueprint for Growth or Communities in Motion plans. Although most local jurisdictions have completed and are using their own comprehensive land use plans, these plans do not always embrace the regional goals and aspirations spelled out in the Blueprint and other regional plans. Moreover, the local comprehensive land use plans are not very well coordinated across jurisdictional boundaries, a lack that often creates conflict at the edges where impact areas meet and overlap. (The survey found that 90 percent of re-

spondents believe that growth in Ada County is *not* well planned.)

The panel heard that local comprehensive land use plans are frequently changed in response to new economic opportunities. Local jurisdictions seem to compete as to who can build faster. In annexation actions and determinations of impact areas, jurisdictions appear to be reaching out to establish control over large undeveloped areas with little to no communication and coordination with neighboring jurisdictions and with little reference to regional growth policies that call for compact development and protection of open space.

The lack of a common vision, along with the ever-changing local comprehensive plans, has created difficulties for ACHD in effectively building and maintaining roads. The district does not have a firm plan to guide its work. In the panel's interviews and discussions, the word "disconnect" was frequently used to characterize land use decisions and capital improvement investments, fostered in part by inadequate communication between the city and county governments, on one hand, and ACHD, on the other, as well as continually changing land use plans. Another factor is that ACHD takes five years or so to design, schedule, and construct road improvements.

In addition, an unusual amount of conflict and personal animosity appears to exist among the leadership of the jurisdictions. Given the pace of growth and change in the valley, people are not surprisingly very busy and often neglect to take the time and show the patience that is essential in dealing with such complicated issues. Moreover, they exude a palpable sense of urgency about the work at hand, and although that is understandable given the pace of growth, this posture means leaders and others do not spend enough time focusing on the long-term interests of the valley. This sense of urgency also seems to create a culture of top-down planning, at the expense of more-inclusive planning processes that allow people to build trust, understanding, and a common vision that leaders and citizens alike can embrace and are willing to implement. Without effective working relationships, projects are delayed or implemented in ways inconsistent with people's expectations,



Construction on Ustick Road is one example of the many frustrations voiced by residents in Ada County.



such as the recent experiences with the Curtis Road and Ustick Road projects that provoked citizen complaints about the land use effects of road improvements.

Although the cities could do a better job of communicating and working together, the panel also identified a number of areas where ACHD might improve:

- ACHD could do a better job at working with the cities (according to 86 percent of the survey respondents).

In the absence of a change in direction, sprawling development will continue outward.



- ACHD has not been as responsive as desirable in responding to local officials' requests for improvements, such as bus stop and speed limit signs, crosswalks, and the use of sidewalks by cafés.
- ACHD historically is viewed as focusing on the interests of developers rather than those of cities and their residents, which logically are its primary clients.

- ACHD frequently is perceived as primarily a road-widening agency rather than a full-scale transportation service provider.

Three additional themes emerged from the panel's findings. First, the panel sensed that many people are frustrated by the lack of an integrated, valley-wide transportation planning system. Residents of the area would like to see ACHD, COMPASS, Valley Regional Transit, and the Idaho Transportation Department come together to create a work-

able transportation plan for individual communities and the region at large. Second, the panel constantly was told that simply not enough money is available for meeting the growing demands for new roads and for maintaining existing roads—and impact fees are both inadequate and cumbersome for smaller communities to use. Finally, it was pointed out that the state legislature has been unwilling to provide the fiscal and regulatory tools required to manage growth better (for example, the recent failed attempt to permit a local option tax to support transit improvements).

Likely Consequences of Current Trends

The consequences of the county's present patterns of development and transportation directly relate to the preceding issues; they also echo the findings of the 1995 and 2003 ULI reports. No doubt they are familiar to most residents of this area. Clearly, Ada County is evolving from a rural, agriculture-based landscape, with large family-owned land holdings, to an area dotted with subdivisions with high trip-generation rates. This change from agriculture and a roadway system oriented to serve the needs of local ranchers and related agribusinesses is now asked to meet the demands of a growing, very mobile population. The rural communities and towns that supported the agricultural economy and lifestyle are struggling to accommodate the new populations coming in to take jobs created by the high-tech companies locating here.

In the absence of a change in direction, these conditions are likely to exacerbate the growth problems, with the following consequences:

- Sprawling development will continue outward from the established towns and cities—essentially extending the “Trends” expectations for future development instead of the “Community Choices” model adopted as the regional plan. Ultimately, growth will spill into adjacent counties and towns that likely will be unprepared for development.
- The spread of development will escalate traffic congestion throughout the county as

- Residents and commuters from other areas continue to depend almost exclusively on automobile travel;
- Improvements in the availability of transit service are shortchanged and delayed;
- The size of the developed area expands and trips become longer; and
- The jobs/housing balance worsens—housing and associated retail development spread west and south while jobs remain focused in the eastern end of the county, generating longer commuting trips.
- The county will experience major losses of open space, farms, and ranches, including the remarkable visual environment formed by the foothills that contribute so much to the character of the region.
- Competition will increase among jurisdictions to seize economic opportunities, fund infrastructure, and provide adequate facilities—with jurisdictions essentially focusing on short-term gains at the expense of long-term value.
- Conflicts between jurisdictions will heighten as they pursue annexations and long-term control of expanded development areas, which also will require continued and costly extensions of infrastructure systems.
- Eventually, the county's governments and agencies will experience greater public rebellion and political turmoil as a consequence of a decline in infrastructure capacities—especially in the transportation system—and may well adopt growth restrictions, such as moratoriums and reductions in the intensity of development.

Although the panel acknowledges the need for flexibility of comprehensive planning to accommodate changing conditions, the lack of a common vision and commitments to policy-based land use plans is creating a development pattern that seems to be compromising the valley's quality of life (83 percent of survey respondents concluded that growth as it currently occurs in the county *does not* contribute to a better quality of life). Current growth-management practices are eroding

Open space is being lost at the foothills.



the individual character of communities; creating transportation congestion; and limiting individual and collective abilities to create self-sustaining communities that include jobs, cultural and recreational opportunities, housing, and other vital aspects of community life. At the same time, the county is losing its agricultural lands, open space, and surrounding foothill environments to poorly directed development.

Countering these trends calls for strong guidance of the county's development; such guidance will, in turn, require effective cooperation among the county's local jurisdictions. Experience across the nation demonstrates that regional collaboration is not easy. It is hard work. But the timing is ripe to take action, and starting with successes that can be built upon is an important first step. The

process will take time, patience, leadership, commitment, and a willingness to work across boundaries of all kinds. The panel's recommendations that follow are intended to assist in putting the highway district and local governments on the right track. The remainder of the report details four specific recommendations for change:

- How development should change;
- Recommended changes in the district's role;
- A proposed legislative agenda; and
- Creating a contractual alliance for integrating land use and infrastructure planning.

How Should Development Change?

Local governments and agencies in Ada County can promote patterns of land use that contribute to residents' quality of life and also support a well-connected transportation system. Many aspects of the Blueprint for Growth and Communities in Motion plans are intended to accomplish this objective. They propose growth policies and actions that are similar in many respects to “smart growth” principles that communities across the nation are adopting to guide development. These principles include the following value-enhancing practices:

- Fostering distinctive communities with compact designs that create a strong sense of place and architectural merit;
- Strengthening existing communities;
- Expanding choices of transportation (such as transit) and connectivity;
- Expanding housing options to serve a broad range of households near job centers;
- Aiming for economic sustainability: encouraging good jobs—not commercial, retail, and service-type jobs—to locate toward the west could reduce much of the commuting (possibly a “shovel ready” industrial park could be developed to attract jobs to the western part of the county);
- Maintaining the productivity of agricultural and other resource lands;
- Protecting environmentally sensitive lands and landscapes;
- Providing adequate drainage and water quality;
- Maintaining and expanding fiscally responsible infrastructure systems; and
- Sustaining development qualities that enhance air quality.

Local comprehensive plans and individual decisions by elected officials about proposed developments frequently disregard these principles, however, putting the region at risk for preserving its cherished living, working, and recreational qualities.

The panel recommends that Ada County and the cities of Boise, Eagle, Garden City, Kuna, Meridian, and Star take the following steps toward ensuring qualities of development that will further the preceding principles:

- Work together to reflect these countywide values in each entity's comprehensive plan. Whether acknowledged or not, the county's and cities' plans affect each other. They must aim toward aligning plan elements to integrate development and transportation patterns across jurisdictional boundaries. These jurisdictions need to move past the state's disinterest in tying development decisions to comprehensive plan policies by encouraging elected officials to increase the predictability and stability of adopted plans, if necessary by considering changes annually rather than semiannually.
- Adopt land use regulations and practices that guide how development is placed on the land and within the community and designed in three dimensions. Development design standards are a key to achieving comprehensive plan goals and ensuring architecturally distinctive and handsome settings for buildings, adequacy of green space and recreational and pedestrian amenities, and connectivity with transportation and environmental systems.
- Engage in countywide transportation planning that accommodates and supports desired land use patterns. The cities and the county should base transportation systems on the land uses specified in comprehensive plans and work to expand opportunities to promote walking, bik-

ing, and the use of various transit modes as a means of dampening the growth of highway and road congestion.

- Find and use public funding sources that provide adequate support for transportation improvements associated with the desired patterns of development and land use. All jurisdictions and agencies concerned with transportation should be enlisted in backing these efforts.
- Improve public participation practices that invite public dialogue while educating both elected officials and their constituents about the necessity of linking land use and transportation. All jurisdictions need to make decision-making processes open and transparent to build support for these linkages. They must seek public collaboration for determining priorities among needed improvements.

Changing the ACHD's Role

As one of the few countywide highway districts in the country, the Ada County Highway District provides numerous benefits. It is doing a good job in maintaining the roadway system. It has a clear understanding of the importance of performing preventive maintenance to protect the county's investment. In states, counties, and cities where this need is not understood, roadway users must cope with a less-functional system and pay more to reconstruct the system more often. Having a countywide highway district in Ada County allows for cost-effective and efficient contracting to build roadways in an efficient and coordinated manner.

The highway district also is doing a good job of operating the highway system. For example, the regional traffic-signal system allows all of the traffic signals to be coordinated to improve traffic flow. Many cities across the country acquire and implement a variety of signal systems, making successful coordination virtually impossible.

These benefits are understood and appreciated by virtually every resident of the county, and these aspects of ACHD's mission should be continued with minimal change. Nevertheless, the panel did hear concerns about the project selection and design procedures, the district's coordination with stakeholders and partners, and the need to be more responsive to requests from the public and other jurisdictions.

Issues and Concerns

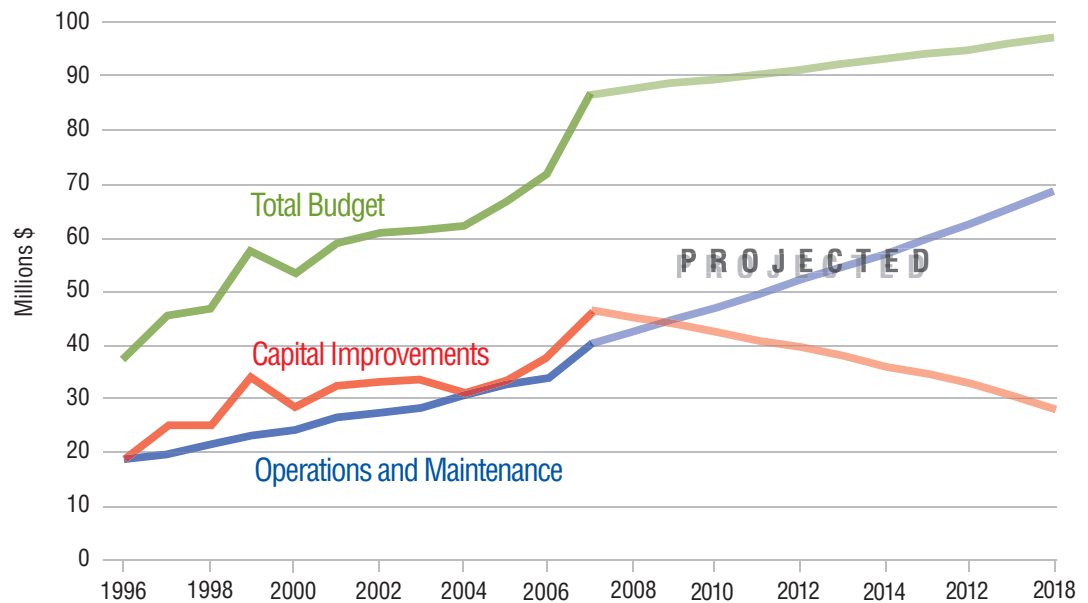
The panel heard about many issues concerning ACHD's programs and practices that have been identified before. In fact, many of these issues were identified by the 2003 ACHD Advisory Committee that was chaired by Charles Winder and Hal Bunderson as well as in prior ULI reports. The major problems that have repeatedly surfaced are the following:

- Rapid growth, coupled with uncoordinated development patterns, has created a significant challenge to the highway district in developing long-term and annual transportation improvement programs.
- Despite recent improvements in the district's management, the public and local jurisdictions need more opportunities for early input on project designs.
- Impact fees currently being charged are low, and the funds derived from them fall well short of addressing the costs of new developments to the transportation system. Impact fees also are not structured to encourage infill and higher-density development that can reduce or contain trip generation.
- ACHD does not have good partner relationships with all the cities, the county, and transit providers.
- Funding sources are neither adequate nor certain for supporting the roadway needs of the county (see Figure 1).
- Although the district has endeavored to improve its relationships with local governments over the past few years, all of these issues have combined to create a negative public image for ACHD along with an atmosphere poisoned by personal animosities.

Recommended Actions and Practices

The district needs to realize that the cities, the county, and other transportation and transit providers are its partners in providing transportation services. The district, the cities, and Ada County should spend less time in court and more time at a conference table as partners working toward common goals.

Figure 1
ACHD Budget Summary



Source: ACHD June 2007 Briefing Book.

Create an Integrated Transportation Plan

In that spirit, perhaps the district's most urgent task is to collaborate with the cities and the county to develop an integrated, comprehensive, transportation improvement plan. The current plans at regional and local levels are oriented to providing short-term "solutions" for traffic congestion on major streets, pay little attention to travel modes other than automobiles, and fail to recognize land use policies in both regional and local plans. A comprehensive transportation plan crafted with the district's partners can map out a more sensible, long-term mobility system that responds to real conditions and issues influencing the way residents and workers travel within the region. Such an integrated plan can then guide development of long-term and annual capital improvement plans to better serve the transportation needs of the cities and county.

Inform the Users

The process of selecting, designing, building, and maintaining a highway system is complex. Highway professionals must understand that education about how decisions are made and how the system works is very important. The district must engage in an ongoing program to educate and inform the general public, staffs of all partner jurisdictions and agencies, and all elected officials about the district's work. Because the roadway projects are designed and built to serve the cities and the public, they should be provided with opportunities for appropriate input to the development process; these can be opportunities to inform and educate residents as well as to seek their input and advice. On all but the most routine projects, public information meetings should be conducted when the project scope is being developed. Projects should also be better coordinated with representatives of the cities and the county. At each stage of design development, project plans should be circulated to

the jurisdictions for their review and comment. Depending on the needs of the jurisdiction, meeting with representatives personally to discuss the projects in detail may be more effective.

Such a program is not a one-way effort in which knowledgeable professionals curry support for planned projects. On the contrary, it should seek to widen understanding of the needs, conditions, and constraints that influence selection and design of transportation improvements. In turn, a successful program will yield valuable inputs in the form of ideas, insights, and helpful solutions to engineering plans as well as timing and neighborhood impact issues. Such contributions can help produce a better design, and the goodwill the district will develop is priceless.

Last, the district should broadcast its successes. Others will publicize its failures, so the district is not out of line in making sure that the public knows about what it is doing well.

Respond to Requests

Highway agencies across the country continually receive requests from members of the public and local governments for specific services, such as installing new stop signs, traffic signals, and crosswalks. Often, the people who are using the highway system on a daily basis have suggestions for improving the system. These requests need to be addressed in a professional and timely manner. As one means of correcting its negative image, and as a partner in good standing with local governments, the district should take responsibility for doing this at the highest level of administration.

Keep Staff Up to Date

Respected highway agencies invest in the ongoing education of their planners and engineers to ensure the quality design of transportation projects. The district should focus on continuous improvement with respect to its expertise in and management of roadway design and project development. This expertise is especially important in areas like Ada County where a high demand for experienced staff exists because of the tremendous amount of development activity. For example, well-designed projects will use the most appropriate technology for managing traffic demand (such as signal coordination and appropriate turn lanes where

needed) and will control the number and location of curb cuts to balance access to adjacent development with the need to move traffic on the roadway system.

Secure Adequate Funding

The district should work with partner jurisdictions and agencies to secure necessary long-term funding sources. This issue is one of the most significant for the district to address, because without adequate, secure funding sources, congestion will continue to grow and system maintenance will suffer.

One of the funding components that should be reevaluated is the impact fees that are assessed on new developments. The impact fees that the district collects made up only 16 percent of the highway improvement budget in 2006. This contribution to funding road improvements is insufficient to offset the actual impacts of the developments to the highway system and is generally lower than fees charged in comparable cities around the country. The district should review the impact fee structure in Ada County and consider increasing these fees so that they more closely reflect the real effects of developments on the transportation system.

An additional funding source that the district should address is the revenue generated by vehicle registration fees. This legislation is scheduled to sunset in 2010, and the district, working with its countywide partnerships, should work to identify alternative and additional revenue sources.

Finally, another funding source that is currently unavailable to the district is land-secured financing. This funding source is used in many other states to allow new development to finance its obligations for public infrastructure over time. The district should work with the cities and the county to obtain state law authorization to use this funding source, not only for road improvements but also for other public facilities.

Suggested Legislative Agenda

The previous sections have recommended a series of actions to be undertaken by ACHD and its partners in Ada County that can be encouraged through changes in Idaho legislation. It is incumbent upon the state government to provide its local governments the tools required to respond to growth pressures, especially to meet the higher standards of urban development expected by the contemporary real estate market and also those imposed by the federal and state governments. In general, the panel has found that public agencies are falling short of an adequate response to the amount and quality of development taking place; part of that problem stems from the limitations established by state legislation. Tension between state legislators representing urban and rural constituencies has been an obstacle to the jurisdictions in Ada County, for example, in keeping pace with its transportation needs.

Therefore, this legislative change agenda responds to needs to reduce competition among jurisdictions for tax base, to implement higher real estate development standards, and to more closely link local land use planning to the transportation and other infrastructure necessary to support growth and development.

Planning and Coordination of Growth

Five legislative changes would help Ada County address transportation and land use issues in a fast-growing metropolitan area.

Enable Strengthening of COMPASS

To support the activities of the Boise region's metropolitan planning organization, COMPASS, the state should require that the organization undertake planning and programming of capital improvements and be allowed to operate services at the request of its member jurisdictions. For example, COMPASS could sponsor a cooperative socioeconomic forecasting process to achieve agree-

ment on jurisdictional and small area inputs to the traffic model.

Allow Use of Transferable Development Rights Programs

To encourage local governments to plan for urban densities in the most-accessible locations and to reduce permitted densities in underserved areas, the state should permit the county and its cities to adopt and manage transferable development rights programs. This tool for guiding growth is used increasingly in growing urban areas.

Improve School Enrollment Forecasting

Another action to improve Boise-area jurisdictions' capabilities for maintaining school capacities in line with development trends is to amend the recently passed legislation funding public school building operating and maintenance costs to require that the school systems annually prepare five-year average daily enrollment forecasts. The projections would help in matching attendance to building capacities, in identifying locations of increased traffic demands, and in prescribing street improvements necessary to provide adequate access to public schools.

Provide Technical Assistance to Localities

Federal law requires certain cities and counties to establish agencies to undertake transportation planning and funding. The activities of such agencies can provide significant encouragement for connecting transportation systems with land use and development. Upon request, the state of Idaho should provide technical assistance to cities and counties responding to these regulations.

Guide Annexation and Establishment of Impact Areas

The state should authorize the preparation of criteria to guide local governmental annexations and establishment of impact area boundaries in which future annexations could take place. Of particular interest, for example, are guidelines for the timing

of infrastructure extensions and evidence of the financial capacity of governments to increase services of such areas.

Funding for Infrastructure

These changes in state enabling legislation would allow ACHD, Ada County, and the six cities to improve their transportation and capital improvements programming processes while increasing revenue to help solve transportation problems.

Infrastructure Financing Districts

The state should permit formation of special-purpose districts that can provide land-secured financing for new and improved public infrastructure. Such special-purpose districts would have the power to issue bonds to build needed public infrastructure and to repay those bonds with taxes or assessments levied on the development served by the financed infrastructure. They would offer an alternative to direct public funding of infrastructure for new development and a more certain flow of funding than impact fees.

Subsidies for Transit Operations

These subsidies should be provided by state funding or local option tax funding to assist in paying operating costs for public transit, which would increase the extent to which transit agencies can attract capital grants and loans from the federal government.

Improved Impact Fees

The state should amend impact fee legislation to (a) better balance the road mileage demands created by development with impact fee revenues and (b) eliminate the property tax credit. Property taxes should be allocated solely to operating expenses. Higher fees for proposed developments in rural areas than in developed areas would improve the linkage of revenue sources with projected traffic demands stimulated by the new development.

Additional Public Funding for Development-Related Infrastructure

The state should take the following actions:

- Extend the vehicle registration fee beyond its 2010 expiration.
- Permit drainage fees whose revenues would be split between ACHD and the appropriate irrigation and drainage districts. ACHD's drainage costs have escalated in recent years and will continue to do so as development increases impervious surfaces and resulting stormwater runoff.
- Share retail sales revenue with jurisdictions at the point of origin.
- Increase the state gasoline tax applicable to transportation improvements. (Idaho's tax is among the lowest in the Intermountain Region.)
- Permit Ada County jurisdictions to raise taxes and fees for public services to support growth and development. As the state's most prominent urbanizing area, Ada County represents a unique economic, cultural, and educational resource deserving public investments not necessarily needed by other Idaho local governments. This approach that distinguishes between urban and rural needs has been used effectively in the metropolitan Seattle area.

Creating a Contractual Alliance for Integrated Planning

The panel concluded that the current inter-governmental difficulties in integrating land use and transportation planning in Ada County require the invention of a collaborative entity with powers and incentives for

- Creating, through collaborative intergovernmental discussions, integrated land use plans that are directly related to capital planning for roads and other infrastructure;
- Changing the role of the ACHD so it builds roads that the cities and county want; and
- Building a coalition of the cities, the county, and the district that can advocate modifications of state law to provide needed tools for financing and managing growth.

The panel recommends that the local governments in Ada County enter into an intergovernmental agreement that creates a forum to address these issues by forming a Local Government Alliance (the Alliance) among the six cities in Ada County, Ada County, and the highway district.

The Local Government Alliance

The Alliance is designed to serve three key purposes:

- Provide stability in land use planning for the district, which could then better support the cities' and county's transportation needs;
- Encourage high-quality development patterns and transportation facilities throughout the county; and
- Provide a forum for acting on a joint legislative agenda that will provide the financing and management tools necessary for the region to effectively respond to growth.

The panel envisions that members of the Alliance would be elected officials appointed by the local governments of their respective jurisdictions (the six cities, the county, and the district) and one citizen at large, whose appointment would be subject to three-fourth's majority approval of the other eight voting members. The citizen-at-large member would act as the chair and full-time chief executive officer (CEO) of the Alliance. The CEO position should be filled by a person who is well respected throughout the county, perceived as completely unbiased, and capable of building consensus and resolving conflicts. The CEO should also possess a thorough knowledge of planning and transportation processes.

The proposed Alliance would not constitute another layer of government; rather, it would form a coalition of existing governments capable of building countywide cooperation in responding to growth. Its formation would not require amendment of state law. The forum's principal function would be to integrate the comprehensive plans and impact areas of the six cities and the county with each other to ensure that the district's capital plan for transportation improvements supports the cities' and county's land use plans. Such integration establishes a collaborative "bottom-up" planning process in contrast to the top-down process that has characterized other planning efforts in Ada County.

Figure 2 diagrams the sequence and responsibilities under the Alliance forum that would result in an integrated capital improvement plan (and Figure 3 shows the existing city planning structure). The panel recommends that ACHD provide the Alliance with five-year projections of revenues available to the cities and the county for transportation investment, the cities and the county provide their integrated plans to the Alliance, and the Alliance then identify and define the projects

Figure 2
Proposed Alliance Planning Structure

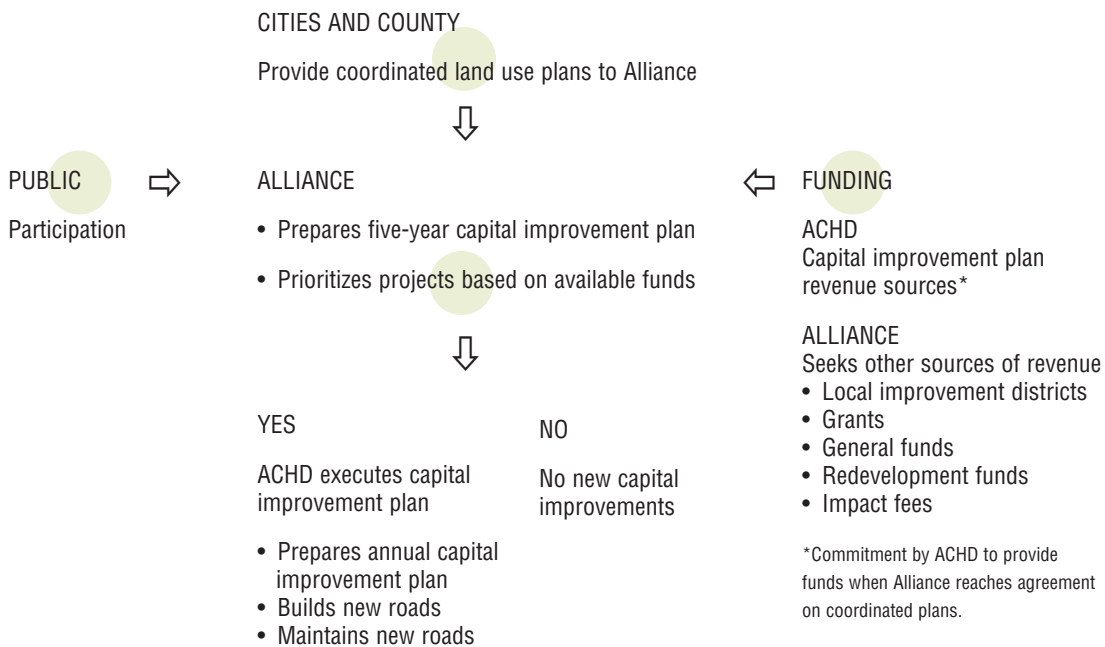
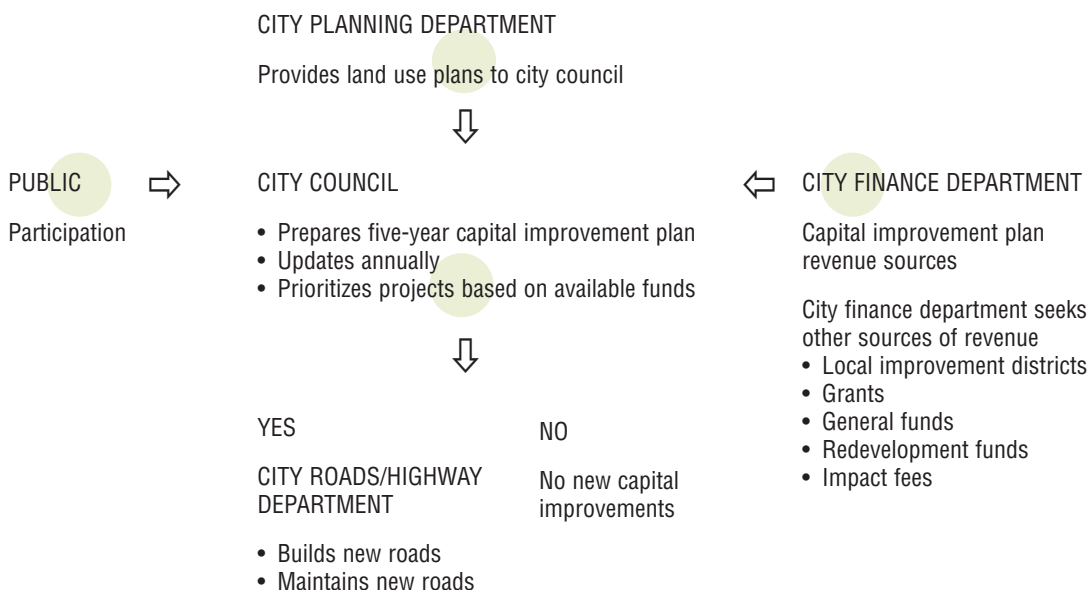


Figure 3
Existing City Planning Structure



to be included in the capital improvement plan and establish priorities based upon local plans.

Elements of the Agreement

The intergovernmental agreement has two key components:

- For the cities and county: In return for the cities and county agreeing to provide coordinated land use plans, the highway district will delegate the countywide general highway planning functions to the Alliance. The district then builds and maintains a transportation network that complies with the various plans of the cities and county.
- For the highway district: In return for agreeing to transfer the transportation planning responsibilities to the cities and the county, the district gains integrated and stable local comprehensive plans on which to base its services.

The agreement should address several key features, described in the following sections, for which the panel has identified some possible approaches. As the Alliance further defines its roles and responsibilities, it can review, revise, and finalize these approaches to reflect the local governments' desires.

Membership

The panel recommends that the Alliance consider dividing membership into two classes:

- Voting members would consist of elected officials appointed by their respective jurisdictions from the local governments (the six cities, the county, and the district) and one citizen at large, whose appointment would be subject to three-fourth's majority approval of the other eight voting members.
- Advisory or nonvoting members: The Alliance may wish to consider adding advisory, nonvoting members to the Alliance who may include, but not necessarily be limited to, representatives of such entities as the Idaho Department of Transportation, COMPASS, and the Chamber of Commerce.

Consensus

The panel recommends that the Alliance strive for unanimous agreement on all its considerations. Given the nature of the process and potential conflicts, however, discussion of possible voting procedures that recognize the differing circumstances of both large and small jurisdictions is very likely. Other regional entities frequently use a two-tier voting system that provides each jurisdiction with meaningful voting power but also addresses the issues associated with proportionality.

Given the distribution of population in Ada County, where Boise has more than 50 percent of the county's population, designing such a system without making the smaller jurisdictions feel overpowered will be difficult. In addition, ACHD could rightfully argue that its countywide population should be considered in a proportional voting system. The panel suggests that this issue requires further study, which should include the following issues:

- Making only some issues eligible for a proportional voting;
- Including a mechanism for resolving a dispute involving two land use jurisdictions that includes careful consideration of the merits by the Alliance as a whole; and
- Charging the chair of the Alliance with a mediation role for disputes between jurisdictions.

Staff Support

The panel further recommends that support and staff structure for the Alliance evolve over two stages:

- Stage 1 (in the short term): One senior-level staff person from each jurisdiction on a 30 percent full-time equivalent basis;
- Stage 2 (more permanent): The Alliance develops a permanent support and staff structure that could be the continuation of in-kind staff.

Administrative Funding

The panel recommends that the participating jurisdictions provide interim startup funds, largely for salary of the CEO, limited support staff, and services (for the first six months, a rough estimate

of \$300,000–\$350,000, which could be substantially reduced based upon more extensive in-kind contribution of staffing or support services). These funds would be provided on a 50-50 basis by the district, on the one hand, and the cities and county (based on 50 cents per capita), on the other. Possibly, state funds, federal funds, or both could be secured that would even further reduce the necessary local dues. Some level of local dues should be retained, however, to convey a local financial commitment to the Alliance and to provide grant-matching capabilities if state or federal funds can be obtained.

Expectations

The members' expectations as a result of formation of and participation in the Alliance are envisioned by the panel as follows:

- For the cities and the county:
 - Improved coordination of land use and transportation planning among the cities, the county, and the district;
 - Improved integration and coordination of comprehensive plans and countywide agreement on areas of impact and future annexations; and
 - Improved control of highway infrastructure (from both a land use consistency and a qualitative perspective).
- For the highway district:
 - Stability in the implementation and construction of the cities' and the county's transportation infrastructure; and
 - Continuation of the provision of services as outlined in the panel's recommendations regarding the district's roles, especially maintenance and operation of local streets and roads.
- For the Alliance:
 - Preparation and approval of the five-year capital improvement plan;
 - Sponsorship of common legislative initiatives;
- Provision of a countywide forum;
- Establishment of appropriate impact fee levels across the six cities, the county, and the district;
- Oversight of transportation modeling to ensure comparable and accurate traffic projections are being used; and
- Encouragement of better infrastructure planning in nontransportation areas through, for instance, creation of model public facilities ordinances that tie the rate of growth to the availability of public facilities.

Benefits of Alliance Membership

The panel envisions that the agreement and Alliance could further lead to a broader, more integrated transportation plan that could include a range of transportation modes, such as bus rapid transit, light rail, bikes, and pedestrian components. Continued operations and maintenance needs also can be addressed by the district in the context of the integrated plan, including the following:

- Local government allocations of transportation funds to jurisdictions where an agreement has been reached;
- A local government role in determining the design and quality of transportation facilities (with an option to enhance those facilities when the cities or county are willing to fund the added costs);
- Improved transparency and accountability of decision making;
- Denial of transportation funding to development that is inconsistent with the comprehensive transportation plan; and
- Common, and therefore much more effective, legislative advocacy positions within the state legislative processes.

In summary, unless the cities and the county take a proactive approach toward countywide coordination and cooperation, the consequences of continued and even accelerated growth will be substan-

The panel envisions the sign saying: “This road improvement project was approved by the Cities of Boise and Meridian and is being built by ACHD.”



tially more sprawl, increased traffic congestion, loss of economic competitiveness, deteriorating air quality, loss of open space, and an overall deterioration of the quality of life in Ada County. These challenges warrant a concerted, collaborative effort by the cities and the county to take the necessary actions to avoid those kinds of outcomes. The panel has proposed a solution that calls for coordination of local comprehensive plans, agreements

on the respective impact areas of each city, an integrated approach to future annexations, and adopting integrated public facilities ordinances (especially transportation).

The incentive for the cities and the county to enter into such an agreement is based upon a commitment by the ACHD to provide construction funds for transportation improvements when the Alliance reaches agreement on a coordinated and integrated countywide capital improvement plan directly related to the integrated land use plans. Until the Alliance provides an integrated capital improvement plan, the district will focus on its operations and maintenance responsibilities. If a city approves a development inconsistent with its adopted comprehensive plan, the district will withhold its signature from the plat map and funding for highway construction that serves that project.

Conclusion

One of the panelists, Mayor Janet Taylor of Salem, Oregon, ended the formal presentation in Boise with the following appeal for sensible and productive collaboration among governments in Ada County, which the panel echoes.

The panel was impressed with the beauty and opportunities so evident in Ada County, but development continues to raise questions about the future quality of this rich living and working environment. Clearly, the status quo approach to guiding development can no longer apply. Elected officials, especially, are learning that this area cannot afford—either financially or politically—to endure more years of inaction, additional studies, and poor coordination of land use and transportation.

Current customer service levels are inadequate, and litigation, personality conflicts, and competition among government entities have eroded taxpayer support for the present structure of inter-governmental relations. And let us not forget that for elected officials the ultimate client is the taxpayer.

The current behavior and structure of decision making about development issues leaves the highway district with no certainty about desired land use that enables it to plan for the region's future transportation system. As a result, the cities and the county cannot rely on provision of roads and other services that meet the needs of the people who live in the area. It is time for a change! As mayor of Salem, Oregon, which is also a capital city in a large metropolitan area, I can easily see that there are efficiencies in combined service delivery that can eliminate duplication of equipment, studies, and administration. I can also see the difficulty of meshing the needs of a larger community with those of the smaller cities.

In Ada County, the majority of the higher-paying jobs are in the city of Boise, with many of the employees residing to the west. You are dependent on each other for the ultimate success of providing both homes and jobs for the area. It is imperative that you become supportive of each city's vision and identify common goals for the region that will unite your efforts to guide future growth. Good land use and transportation systems are goals you have in common; working together on those goals does not require that you lose the unique character of your individual communities.

The panel's recommendation is to form a decision-making entity—the Local Government Alliance—that enables the highway district to provide transportation services as determined by the majority of the Alliance members in return for the cities and county ensuring predictability in land use. The result is higher-quality development, roads that add value to your communities, and greater political strength at the state level to obtain the tools you need to fund your infrastructure.

Elected officials set the tone for your communities for the present and the future. The tone needs to be one of teamwork, cooperation, and prudent use of taxpayer dollars. The panel has confidence that you can move forward, and we challenge you to put the past behind you, provide the leadership to step up to a new approach, and take this opportunity to make your area the best it can be for today and for the future.

It is time for a change!

About the Panel

Charles A. Long

*Panel Chair
Berkeley, California*

Long is a developer specializing in mixed-use infill projects, including acquisition, entitlement, consulting, and development. He has 31 years of diverse experience in local government and development with an emphasis on economic development, finance, and public/private partnerships. He served for eight years as city manager in Fairfield, California, a city with a national reputation as innovative and well managed.

Since 1996, Long has worked as a consultant to public and private clients on development and management. He has held interim positions for several cities in finance, redevelopment, and management, including, most recently, interim town manager of Mammoth Lakes, California. His assignments have been diverse, including writing redevelopment plans, working on development projects, conducting pro forma analysis, conducting strategic planning, representing public agencies in negotiations, marketing development opportunities, assisting with organizational development, conducting capital and financial planning, implementing budget reform, analyzing base reuse, and promoting alternative energy development. He has overseen more than \$600 million of public financing in his career. Since 2005, Long has worked on real estate development focused in northern California and northern Nevada.

Long is a full member of the Urban Land Institute and, within ULI, a member of the Public Private Partnership Council, a member the Policy and Practices Committee, and a faculty member for the Real Estate Development Process: Part II and Decision-Making for Development Professionals courses. He has worked on eight ULI Advisory Panels, most recently chairing a panel in Salem, Oregon. He has taught at the School of

Public Administration at Golden Gate University and has conducted courses on economic development and organizational change internationally.

Long has a BA in economics from Brown University and a master's of public policy from University of California, Berkeley. He served in the U.S. Army as an infantry platoon sergeant.

William Dowd

Washington, D.C.

Dowd has 22 years of public service that include highway engineering, planning, and construction experience with the Connecticut Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration; and project review, development, and implementation experience with the National Capital Planning Commission, where he has worked since 1998.

His experience as a highway engineer includes work in Connecticut, Kentucky, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Washington, D.C., giving him a broad background in this field. While in the Federal Highway Administration headquarters office, he also conducted national reviews of construction and project management practices.

With the National Capital Planning Commission, Dowd manages a division that is responsible for advancing and implementing planning initiatives in a city with many overlapping jurisdictional interests, including city, regional, and federal bodies. Specific projects have included design and development of national memorials, such as the World War II Memorial; redesign of Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House; guidelines for streetscape and security improvements at federal buildings in the city; and a feasibility study of relocating freight rail traffic away from the monumental core of the nation's capital.

Dowd is a member of the Urban Land Institute. He is also a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers and has been a member of the American Planning Association and the Institute of Transportation Engineers. He has a BS in civil engineering from the University of Connecticut, and a Professional Engineer license from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Matthew McKinney

Helena, Montana

McKinney is director of the Public Policy Research Institute at the University of Montana. The institute was created by the Board of Regents in 1987 and fosters sustainable communities and landscapes through collaborative governance. Prior to his current position, McKinney served as the founding director of the Montana Consensus Council for ten years. During the past 20-plus years, he has designed, facilitated, and mediated more than 50 public dialogues, including citizen participation and multiparty negotiations on issues related to federal land management, water policy, fish and wildlife, land use planning and growth management, public health and human services, tax policy, and campaign finance reform.

McKinney received a PhD in natural resource policy and conflict resolution from the University of Michigan. He has published numerous articles in journals and books and is coauthor of *The Western Confluence: A Guide to Governing Natural Resources* (Island Press, 2004). He teaches workshops, seminars, and courses on natural resource policy and public dispute resolution and serves on the board of advisers for the Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute and the Intermountain Chapter of the International Association for Public Participation. McKinney is a senior lecturer at the University of Montana's School of Law, a faculty associate at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, and a senior partner with the Consensus Building Institute. He was a research fellow at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, in 2000 and 2002. He lives with his wife and three daughters in Helena, Montana.

Michael T. McLaughlin

Hemet, California

McLaughlin is an urban planning consultant and a part-time member of the faculty in the undergraduate and graduate program for city planning at San Diego State University (SDSU). He had been the director of Regional Planning for the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) for about a dozen years before his retirement in 2004. At SANDAG, his responsibilities included directing a wide range of regional planning activities, including preparation and coordination of binational planning activities, environmental management processes, housing markets and plans preparation, habitat and open space conservation, and land use planning and urban design studies. This work also included preparation of the Regional Comprehensive Plan and regional strategies for growth and growth management-related issues. Prior to working for SANDAG, he was a city planner in Columbus, Ohio, and directed the community development planning program and established its first community planning program.

McLaughlin has an undergraduate degree and a master's degree in public administration from Northern Illinois University and a master's degree in city and regional planning from the Ohio State University. He currently is, or recently was, on the board of directors for Citizens Coordinate for Century-3, the Regionalism Task Force for Envision San Diego, the governor's appointee for the Advisory Board for the Government Technology Corporation, and the Regional Homeless Task Force. He has made numerous presentations and guest lectures on regional growth and growth management planning and coordination in a variety of government, academic, and private sector venues across the country. He is active in the American Planning Association (APA) where he has served in a variety of positions, including section director and national awards jurist, and received the award for Distinguished Leadership by a Professional Planner from the San Diego APA in 2004. He was awarded the Outstanding Lecturer at SDSU in spring 2007.

Douglas R. Porter

Chevy Chase, Maryland

Porter is a nationally recognized authority on managing community and regional growth. In consulting and writing, and through the nonprofit Growth Management Institute that he founded in 1992, he conducts research and engages in educational activities to improve the policy and practice of growth management. From 1979 to 1991, Porter directed the public policy research program of the Urban Land Institute. His work bridges traditional specialties in urban planning and development, from affordable housing programs to transportation/land use relationships, regional growth strategies, transit-oriented development, community involvement, and local community development issues. Recently, he has advised Coweta County, Georgia; Maryville and Blount County, Tennessee; and Palm Beach County, Florida, on growth issues. He regularly lectures on growth management topics at conferences, workshops, and universities.

His recent publications include *Smart Growth Endorsement/Rating Systems* (APA); *Breaking the Logjam: Civic Engagement by Developers and Planners* (ULI); *Inclusionary Zoning for Affordable Housing* (ULI); *Developing around Transit* (chapter on suburban transportation-oriented developments) (ULI); *Exploring 'Ad Hoc' Regionalism* (Lincoln Institute); and *Making Smart Growth Work* (ULI). Currently, he is completing a new edition of *Managing Growth in America's Communities* (Island Press) and a book about the value of design for ULI.

Porter is an AICP Fellow and has been a ULI Fellow and chair of the Maryland Transportation Commission. He received a BS and MS in urban and regional planning from Michigan State University and the University of Illinois, respectively.

Mary Roberts

Littleton, Colorado

Roberts has 25 years of experience in land use, transportation, housing, and economic development. Her background spans the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. She has worked for large

cities (Denver, Colorado), small towns (Aspen, Colorado), and regional agencies (San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District [BART]).

Currently, Roberts serves as the director of community development for the city of Littleton, Colorado. A midsize suburb of Denver, Littleton is home to 47,000 people. It is situated between two major highway corridors and is the end of the line for the area's first light rail, which has been operating since 2000. Roberts manages a department of 17, overseeing all new development and redevelopment in the city. She coordinates extensively with public works, traffic, and engineering, as well as outside agencies, elected and appointed officials, and citizen groups. She has been with the city since October 2002. Upon arriving at the city, she undertook a departmental assessment to ascertain how best to allocate the limited staff resources of the department to meet desired service levels and identified customer needs. This assessment has been the basis for restructuring of positions to better achieve city council goals.

As executive director of the Aspen/Pitkin County Housing Authority, Roberts managed an intergovernmental agency charged with developing, managing, and setting policy for affordable housing. She led the authority through an expansion of its development program, bringing more than 200 new affordable units into the program. She was responsible for negotiating land deals, setting development programs, and obtaining project entitlements. She also secured the long-term affordability of existing housing stock by working with landowners to convert rental property to affordable ownership units. While at BART she led the organization's first strategic planning effort, which entailed examination of management as well as operational systems. She worked with the elected board and senior staff to identify core service values, create a vision for the agency's future, and establish implementation priorities.

Roberts also has experience working with advocacy groups and citizen involvement. While at the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, a regional nonprofit group in the San Francisco area, she worked with local volunteers to achieve a regional trail system for an eight-county area. Educating volunteers, decision makers, property owners, and

donors formed the basis of her work. As a consultant in the private sector, she has produced comprehensive, special area, and neighborhood plans as well as environmental assessments for development projects.

Roberts holds a master's degree in urban planning from the University of Colorado at Denver, a master's in public administration from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, and a bachelor's degree in social sciences from Illinois State University.

David C. Slater

Reston, Virginia

Now semi-retired, Slater was a development economics consultant for more than 32 years, a regional planner for seven years, and a community development association staff member for three years. He has been responsible for a range of development strategy, development program, and real estate market analyses in 23 states and was an adjunct professor of planning at the University of Virginia.

He analyzed development economics issues faced by cities, counties, and states seeking new private investments and reallocations of public resources. These assignments were often focused on downtown and neighborhood revitalization, transportation infrastructure, growth management, large-scale redevelopment, and demand for community facilities. On these topics Slater has presented more than 30 papers at national conferences and other papers at regional conferences of his peers. He is the author of the "green book" on *Management of Local Planning* published by the International City/County Management Association.

Slater holds a master's of regional planning from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a BS in planning from Michigan State University.

Jim Soules

Seattle, Washington

Soules is a principal and founder of The Cottage Company, LLC, a Seattle-based residential development company focused on building "pocket

neighborhoods" of detached single-family homes, cottages, and compact homes. He has a BA in economics from University of California, Berkeley, and an MBA from Harvard Business School.

Soules began his career as a planner with the Marin County (California) Planning Department and has 30 years of experience in residential development that includes single- and multifamily projects in California and Washington. Prior to launching The Cottage Company in 1996, he served as president of Acacia Construction Inc. (a medium-sized California residential developer), country director for Save the Children's Afghan Refugee Program in Pakistan, and executive director of Threshold Housing (a Seattle nonprofit housing developer).

Since 1996, The Cottage Company has completed seven communities, several of which have received national and regional awards. The company's projects are seen as models for the shift to "better rather than bigger" green building and to restoring community to our neighborhoods. Soules has been on several national housing award juries and a speaker or panelist at many housing forums. He is actively involved in conversations with municipalities and public groups who seek to create new housing choices in their communities.

Janet Taylor

Salem, Oregon

Taylor is in her third term as mayor of Salem, Oregon. She was the co-owner and operator of a metal roofing manufacturing company for 18 years and continues as a partner in a development company dealing with land use issues, leasing, and general contracting for residential and industrial projects.

She has been vice president of the Salem Area Chamber of Commerce and chair of Sedcor—the largest economic development group in Oregon, serves on the board of the Convention and Visitors Association, and is president of the Oregon Chapter of the National Brownfields Association.

Taylor's service as mayor has brought a pro-business atmosphere and collaboration between

diverse interests to work for the benefit of the entire community. This has resulted in a new conference center and hotel in downtown, with six downtown historic buildings undergoing major mixed-use renovations.

Under her leadership, a 500-acre industrial park is now “shovel ready,” private investors are building in urban renewal districts, and the city is relocating facilities to assemble a master site for a uni-

versity to build a performing arts center. She led the presentation for a statewide competition that resulted in the selection of Salem for a \$56 million grant for a Salvation Army Kroc Community Center, bringing a major aquatic and recreational facility to the area.

Taylor attended Chemeketa Community College and obtained her private pilot’s license in 1981.



ULI—the Urban Land Institute

1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.
Suite 500 West
Washington, D.C. 20007-5201